

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

February 22, 2001 LB 31

of the body. Since 1977, the Nebraska State Legislature has provided handicapped parking systems for our citizens. It's provided through the Department of Motor Vehicles. The purpose was to ensure the mobility, dignity and independence for all of Nebraska's disabled citizens. What we provide is a license plate which is comparable to the one you see on anyone's vehicle, but also it provides a placard that is portable, that people can hang on their rearview mirrors and can then, in fact, use transportation provided by other drivers in their own personal vehicles. The qualification requirements in the state of Nebraska are broad, they are far broader than the federal requirements for ADA and, in fact, under the federal ADA rule, many people would not qualify that we have qualified in the state of Nebraska. The Urban Affairs Committee had a bill two years ago, Senator Hartnett brought it to the committee, it was LB 741. We had a hearing in February of '99 and were unanimously in support of the bill. We held the bill in committee because we were dealing with some other handicapped parking issues--cones, access aisles, et cetera. Unfortunately, our holding it in committee meant that we did not act upon the floor on this matter. Last spring, we again tried to move the bill out to the floor, but because of the short session were not successful in having it passed on the floor. Since that time, the matter actually has gone to court in Lancaster County. In that court, District Judge Bernard McGinn ruled that the court finds and declares that the permit fee imposed on the authority of Nebraska Statute 18-1736 through 18-1741 violates the federal ADA in its regulations. So in fact the courts have agreed with the Urban Affairs Committee and said, we don't want to levy this permit fee on that placard that is portable. Our license plates are already free. Our placard we have been charging, and this bill, LB 31, would remove that fee. The counties would no longer levy at...the Department of Motor Vehicles actually are the ones who dispense that through the county. So I would ask your support of this bill. It removes that \$3 fee and makes it free to our disabled citizens, and I think it's the right thing to do. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Redfield. To open on the committee amendments, Senator Janssen.